

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

February 17, 2012
8:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair
Senator Joe Thomas, Co-Chair
Senator Bettye Davis, Vice Chair
Senator Hollis French
Senator Gary Stevens

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 194

"An Act providing for a school improvement and revitalization procedure in the Department of Education and Early Development; establishing advisory councils for school improvement; and requiring reports to the legislature."

- MOVED CSSB 194(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 182

"AN ACT AMENDING THE AMOUNT OF STATE FUNDING PROVIDED TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 194

SHORT TITLE: PROCEDURES FOR LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(S): EDUCATION

02/08/12	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/08/12	(S)	EDC, FIN
02/13/12	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/13/12	(S)	Heard & Held
02/13/12	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/15/12	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/15/12	(S)	Heard & Held
02/15/12	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)

02/17/12

(S)

EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

MURRAY RICHMOND, Staff
Senator Joe Thomas
Co-Aide
Senate Education Standing Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Reviewed the committee substitute for SB 194.

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Neutral on SB 194. He answered questions on the committee substitute.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:03:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOE THOMAS called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Davis, Stevens, French, Co-Chair Meyer and Co-Chair Thomas

SB 194-PROCEDURES FOR LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

[8:03:41 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS announced the consideration of SB 194.

[8:03:53 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEYER [moved to adopt CSSB 194(), labeled 27-LS1190\I, as the working document.]

[8:04:06 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS objected for the purposes of discussion.

[8:04:26 AM](#)

MURRAY RICHMOND, Staff to Senator Thomas, Alaska State Legislature, and co-aide to the Senate Education Standing Committee, reviewed the committee substitute (CS). He said the first change was on page two, line 15, "highly qualified teachers" was changed to "high quality teachers." He said there

was a terminology conflict with the U.S. Department of Education.

He said the next change was on page three, lines 27, 28 and 30, the term "the degree of" was added to assist with defining the requirements of audits.

He said the next change was on page four, line eight, "school or district" was changed to "school."

MR. RICHMOND said "governance council" was changed to "revitalization advisory council."

He said on page four, lines 10 and 11, added "in conjunction with the local school board and the district superintendent, may."

He said the next change was on page four, line 25, added "a school that has not been designated as a revitalization school may request the local school board to establish a revitalization advisory council."

[8:07:28 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked to clarify that a school may request its school board to establish a RAC.

MR. RICHMOND answered correct. He said a non-designated low-performing school may request their school board to receive DEED approval for RAC.

SENATOR STEVENS asked to clarify that a school board shall establish a RAC when designated as low-performing by DEED.

MR. RICHMOND answered yes.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS commented that he hoped everyone understood the distinction that allowed a school to request their school board to establish a RAC prior to low-performing designation.

CO-CHAIR MEYER commented that a RAC would consist of 13 members and addressed his concerns for filling positions in rural areas. He asked how the RAC size was chosen and was 13 members a set number.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS responded that RAC participants increased when additional school board members were added. He said the intent

was to involve more community members and noted that less RAC members made sense in areas with smaller school boards.

[8:11:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEYER commented that he would like flexibility for RAC member size.

MR. RICHMOND said there was a provision in the bill for a one-school district to receive a waiver for RAC member size. He said the RAC member size waiver could be expanded.

SENATOR STEVENS commented that a change to RAC was to include the addition of two to four school board members. He asked if a provision to include school board members was removed during the editing process.

MR. RICHMOND responded that during the editing process the school boards were given the option of appointing school board members.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS said Senator Stevens' concern was that school board representation was optional rather than mandatory.

[8:14:20 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS said school board members should be directly involved in RAC to act as a non-quorum liaison.

MR. RICHMOND responded that the school board appointed the RAC.

SENATOR STEVENS replied that he understood that.

SENATOR DAVIS commented that the language did not include mandatory RAC school board appointments.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS responded that an additional RAC configuration requirement could include up to three school board members.

SENATOR STEVENS commented that school board members could not have a quorum in RAC.

MR. RICHMOND responded that school board representation in RAC was addressed in section (d).

SENATOR DAVIS commented that five member school boards could not have more than two RAC representatives.

MR. RICHMOND answered correct.

SENATOR DAVIS commented on RAC membership within the parent and community cohorts. She asked if the parent and community leader cohorts be reduced from four to three members in order to allow for two school board members to be included as a separate category.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS answered yes.

[8:17:41 AM](#)

SENATOR FRENCH asked if DEED knew which low-performing schools would fall in the 3 percentile group. He said there was concern with not enough bodies to go around and knowing specific schools could assist with defining RAC membership.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS answered that he did not know if schools could be identified in advance. He said RAC member size could be changed in addition to adding an assurance for school board participation.

SENATOR FRENCH responded that he would go along with whatever the committee thought best.

SENATOR STEVENS asked if there would always be 17 councils operating in the state.

MR. RICHMOND responded that 3 percent of the lowest performing schools would have a RAC. He said the current number was 17 schools.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS asked if the committee should set a maximum number or make RAC membership flexible.

[8:19:59 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEYER responded that he would prefer to go with flexibility due to unknown population parameters.

MR. RICHMOND responded that requiring 13 RAC members could be eliminated and flexibility provided for participant cohorts.

SENATOR STEVENS responded that RAC size flexibility was a good idea. He said some RAC members might represent multiple cohorts.

MR. RICHMOND said changes could be made to adjust cohort numbers and a proviso added for smaller school boards.

SENATOR FRENCH commented that the term "one or more" could be added to parent, community, teacher and school board cohorts. He said the remaining cohorts would be noted as having "one" representative.

[8:22:58 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS responded that would be acceptable. He suggested that parents and community leader cohorts be changed from four to two representatives.

MR. RICHMOND asked if a school board cohort should be added to the required RAC appointments.

SENATOR FRENCH responded yes. He said at least one school board member should be appointed and noted that an individual could count in multiple cohorts.

MR. RICHMOND recommended that only school board members be allowed to nominate parents and community leaders for RAC selection.

SENATOR FRENCH concurred that consolidating nomination within the school board would remove an added decision layer.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS summarized that the committee was in agreement that school boards with five or fewer members would be allowed to select two board members for RAC. He said larger school boards would have at least three RAC members with flexibility provided for parent and community leader selection.

[8:25:20 AM](#)

SENATOR FRENCH said he agreed that a RAC would include school board members without forming a quorum, flexibility provided for RAC membership and allow individuals to represent multiple RAC cohorts.

MR. RICHMOND said page seven, lines 15-18, a requirement was added for a school board to report to DEED when a RAC revitalization model was rejected. He said the report would provide DEED with information on RAC model effectiveness.

He said page seven, lines 19-24, would allow school boards to accept all or part of a RAC revitalization model.

[8:29:08 AM](#)

MR. RICHMOND said language was deleted regarding DEED being required to adjudicate between the RAC and the school board.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS asked if a conceptual amendment should be done.

SENATOR DAVIS recommended that changes be made by the Education Committee rather than the Finance Committee.

MR. RICHMOND asked if a bill may be passed out of committee with changes that are not formally adopted.

[8:30:50 AM](#)

At ease from` 8:30 a.m. to 8:33 a.m.

[8:33:00 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS asked if Senator French had an amendment to present.

SENATOR FRENCH answered yes and presented an amendment for adoption.

A M E N D M E N T 1

Page 4, line 31:

Insert "up to" prior to the number "13"

Page 5, line 2:

Delete "four"

Insert "one or more"

Page 5, line 4:

Delete "four"

Insert "one or more"

Page 5, line 6:

Delete "two"

Insert "one or more"

Page 5, after line 10, subsection 7:

Insert "one or more members of the school board"

Page 5, line 3:

Delete "nominated by parents or guardians of the school"

Page 5, line 5:

Delete "nominated by the members selected under (1) and (3) of this subsection"

He said section (d), properly stated that individuals may be from multiple cohorts and the amount of school board members serving on RAC could not be a quorum.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS asked if page 5, lines 11-14, was agreeable regarding RAC appointments for school boards with more than five members having up to three members and school boards with five or fewer members may appoint up to two members.

SENATOR FRENCH answered yes, as long as the school board did not form a RAC quorum.

[8:37:31 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS said Amendment 1 was officially accepted and asked if there was an objection. He said hearing no objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS said he would remove the objection to the CS. He asked if there were further objections.

SENATOR STEVENS said he would like to hear from DEED for comments on the current intervention system and what the proposed RAC model would do.

[8:38:55 AM](#)

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, said the department does not insist on RAC for the current intervention system. He said the member makeup for the proposed RAC was not the model currently used in intervention areas that require advisory committees. He said DEED was presently not directly engaged with advisory committees. He said school principals received good leadership practices support and the same training was available to others, but not required.

He said DEED would strive to implement a consistent RAC model for all low-performing schools.

[8:41:12 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked how long the current intervention model had been in place.

MR. MORSE answered three years for the current intervention program with coaching support. He said the previous intervention without coaching support dated back to 1985.

SENATOR FRENCH asked which schools might be involved in the lower 3 percent. He also asked if the list would be similar to the schools mentioned in the Moore Case.

MR. MORSE answered that he could not predict specific schools, but the districts noted in the Moore Case would likely be consistent with the districts in the lower 3 percent.

[8:43:55 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked if the department's ability to enforce financial accountability would be impacted.

MR. MORSE answered that he did not believe it would. He said he believed the intent was to engage the community and the department would not be prevented from doing the work it needs to do.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS responded that the intent was to enhance and work with DEED to try and solve intervention district problems.

CO-CHAIR THOMAS said the committee adopted the amendment and his objection for the CS was removed.

[8:45:56 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEYER moved to report CSSB 194(), version I as conceptionally amended from the committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

CO-CHAIR THOMAS said there being no objection, CSSB 194(EDC) moved from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[8:46:45 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Co-Chair Thomas adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 8:46 a.m.